



P.O. Box 19334
Irvine, CA 92623-9334

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Smart Living with COPD

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Recipe: Great Pumpkin Soup

In honor of the season, we bring you this recipe from the Mayo Clinic for a hearty and healthy *pumpkin* soup! The great pumpkin and its seeds are tasty and chock full of nutrients like vitamins C and E, iron, zinc, magnesium, and potassium. *Enjoy!*

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 3/4 cup water
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 8 ounces pumpkin puree (fresh or canned) *Make your own puree by roasting a small pumpkin and whipping the flesh in a blender or food processor.
- 1 cup unsalted vegetable broth
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 green onion, green top only, chopped



Directions In a large saucepan, heat 1/4 cup of the water over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Don't let the onion dry out.

Add the remaining water, pumpkin, broth, cinnamon and nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the milk and cook until hot. Don't boil. Ladle into warmed individual bowls

and garnish with black pepper and green onion tops. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis Serving size: 1 cup
Calories: 72, Cholesterol: 1 mg, Protein: 3 g,
Sodium: 241 mg, Carbohydrate: 12 g, Fiber: 2 g,
Total Fat: 1 g, Potassium: 199 mg, Saturated Fat:
less than 1 g, Calcium: 78 mg

Flu Vaccine: A Shot in the Arm

Did you get the flu shot last year? Great. But now it's time to get it again.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone over six months of age get the flu vaccine. It's especially important for young children, people 65 and older, and individuals with asthma, diabetes, heart disease, COPD and other chronic conditions to get vaccinated. This is because their immune systems are weaker.

It's also important for pregnant women to get the vaccine, because the flu can hurt developing fetuses. Ditto for healthcare workers and caregivers so they won't infect the fragile populations (babies, elderly and the infirm) in their care.

And don't forget: the flu vaccine is seasonal. That means you must get it *every year*. Last year's vaccine will *not* protect you against this year's flu, the CDC warns.

The flu vaccine is given two ways – by needle or nasal (nose) mist. The shot is approved for people over six months of age. The nasal spray is approved for healthy people, 2 to 49 years of age, who aren't pregnant.

Side effects. Some people who get the shot may

develop a low-grade fever and/or soreness at the injection site. Children who receive the nasal spray may develop a runny nose, headache, vomiting, muscle aches and/or fever; adults may develop a runny nose, sore throat, headache or cough. Severe reactions are rare. But call your doctor if you develop a high fever, difficulty breathing or other serious symptoms.

People who previously had a bad reaction or have a severe allergy to chicken eggs (the flu vaccine is grown in eggs) should not get the vaccine.

In addition to the vaccine, the CDC recommends you take the following precautions to cut your risk of getting – and spreading – the flu:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your arm (*not your hand*) when you cough or sneeze.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Have flu-like symptoms? Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever goes away (without fever-reducing meds).

It takes about two weeks after you're vaccinated to become flu-protected. So the sooner you get jabbed – the better!

Live Healthy, Cut Heart Risk

Now here's some heartening news. You can significantly lower your risk of heart failure if you don't smoke, aren't overweight, exercise regularly and load up on veggies.

A new study, published in the journal *Circulation: Heart Failure*, found that people who practice at least one healthy behavior decrease their heart failure odds. And the risk dips more with each healthy lifestyle choice you make.

"Any steps you take to stay healthy can reduce your risk of heart failure," said lead study author Gang Hu, director of the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Laboratory at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, La.

In fact, he said, about half of new heart failure cases could be prevented if everyone engaged in at least three healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Researchers studied data from 18,346 men and 19,729 women, aged 25 to 74. Among findings:

- Women smokers had a 109 percent higher heart failure risk and men smokers an 86 percent higher risk than people who never smoked.
- Excess weight increased risk by 21 percent in women and 15 percent in men. The odds shot up to 106 percent for obese women and 75 percent for obese men.
- High levels of physical activity cut risk by 36 percent in women and 33 percent in men. Moderate exercise reduced risk by 21 percent in men and 13 percent in women.
- Eating vegetables three to six times a week cut odds by 26 percent in men and 27 percent in women.

According to the study, heart failure risk plummeted by 70 percent in men and 81 percent in women who practiced *all four healthy behaviors*. Risk dipped 47 percent in women and 32 percent in men who adopted just one healthy behavior.

Heart failure affects some 5.7 million people in the U.S. At age 40, a person's lifetime risk of developing heart failure is one in five.

Want to lower your odds? Start practicing healthy lifestyles today!



Smokeless Tobacco: It's Not Safe

Think smokeless tobacco is a safe alternative to cigarettes? *Forget it!*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) wants to make perfectly clear that tobacco – be it smoke or smokeless – is bad for your health.

How bad?

According to the CDC, smokeless tobacco significantly raises your risk of:

- Cancer, most notably oral cancer
- Tooth decay, gum disease, receding gums and other oral health problems
- Pregnancy complications, including preeclampsia (pregnancy-related hypertension or high blood pressure), low birth weight and premature birth
- Fertility problems in men, including abnormal and low sperm count
- Nicotine addiction and of becoming a cigarette smoker

The bottom line: If you don't use smokeless tobacco – don't start. And if you do – stop!



Is Laughter *Really* the Best Medicine?

Sometimes. But apparently not when it comes to lung disease.

Researchers recently studied the effect of humor and laughter on a small group of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Their findings, published in the journal *Heart & Lung*: a sense of humor definitely helps COPD patients feel better. But laughter is another story.

COPD is a chronic, progressive disorder characterized by difficulty breathing and especially in pushing out air from the lungs. COPD patients – like others with chronic conditions – are at increased risk of depression, infection and a diminished quality of life.



According to the study, a sense of humor helps reduce emotional and physical symptoms. But researchers found that patients actually had *lower pulmonary (lung) function* after laughing aloud during a 30-minute comedy video.

Researchers were surprised by the findings. They had assumed a few laughs would *help* patients release air trapped in their lungs. Instead, they found that when people laughed, they introduced more air into their lungs. Since they already had trouble getting rid of old air, the new load just added to the burden.

The good news: chuckling appears to be a short-term setback, while a sense of humor appears to be a long-term plus!

COPD Rates on the Rise

The incidence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is climbing so fast that it's estimated one of every four people 35 years of age and older will likely develop the lung condition during his or her lifetime, according to a new long-term study.



Canadian researchers studied the medical records of about three million people between the ages of 35 and 80 for 14 years to determine their risk of developing COPD.

Their findings, published in the journal *The Lancet*: people have a greater risk during their lifetime of developing COPD than they do of developing congestive heart failure and certain cancers or of suffering an acute heart attack. They have about the same lifetime risk of COPD as they do of developing asthma or type 2 diabetes.

According to the study, the average 35-year-old woman is *three times more likely* to get COPD than breast cancer during her lifetime. And the average 35-year-old man has a *more than three times greater risk* of developing COPD than prostate cancer.

COPD is a leading cause of hospitalization, and it's projected it will be the third most common cause of death worldwide by 2030.

Researchers at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto (Canada) estimated the lifetime risk of developing COPD is 27.6 percent (or a one in four chance). The risk was higher in men (29.7 percent or almost one in three) than in women (25.6 percent or one in four).

Researchers found that lower socioeconomic status and living in rural areas increased the lifetime risk of COPD.

The No. 1 cause of COPD? Smoking. So don't smoke. And if you do – quit! Need help? Talk to your doctor and/or join community and online smoking cessation programs.